



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 4, 2009

Contact: Captain Mark Welch
Florida Highway Patrol
(850) 617-2378

FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL ADDRESSES TELEPHONE FUNDRAISING CONCERNS

~ The Patrol does not seek donations ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - The Florida Highway Patrol receives questions about telephone fundraising from organizations that claim to represent the Patrol to obtain donations.

Legitimate fraternal organizations operate in Florida and engage in lawful fundraising activities. The FHP does not endorse fundraising made on behalf of its troopers nor does it seek donations. Law and Department policy prohibit troopers from requesting donations. The state of Florida covers troopers' salaries, benefits and equipment.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services investigates consumer complaints and has the power to subpoena records when it appears an organization has violated this law. If you receive a call and question the legitimacy, you should ask the caller to mail literature that establishes the credibility of the organization to you. If you believe the organization is illegitimate, you may lodge a complaint directly with the organization or call the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Consumer Hotline toll free at 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352), or en Español 1-800-FL-AYUDA (352-9832). Consumers can also visit www.800helpfla.com for additional consumer information. Additionally, you may register with the *National Do Not Call Registry* at <https://www.donotcall.gov/default.aspx>.

Numerous resources are available to help donors self-educate and make an informed decision. Below are a few examples of online resources that may be useful.

- www.SunBiz.org: For information on organizations, to include non-profits registered with the Florida Department's of State's Division of Corporations.
- <http://app1.800helpfla.com/giftgiversguide/>: The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Gift Givers' Guide provides revenue information on charitable organizations.
- www.CharityNavigator.org : The national Web site hosts information on large charitable organizations and provides helpful tips for donors.
- www.CharityWatch.org: The American Institute of Philanthropy is a nationally prominent charity watchdog service.

FHP ADDRESSES FUNDRAISING CONCERNS

Page 2

The Florida Highway Patrol does not authorize use of its name for fundraising purposes, and the fraternal organizations using the Patrol's name are not a part of the agency. The Florida Highway Patrol does not have the authority to permit, regulate, control, prohibit or review such fundraising prior to a call's completion. Nor does FHP control or approve the funds outside organizations collect and expend.

The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles encourages anyone with a valid Florida driver license or identification card to go online to www.flhsmv.gov and enter their Emergency Contact Information. The ECI system gives law enforcement immediate access to contact information in cases of an emergency, which makes it easier to contact a family member or friend.

###